

NEWS

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PREPAREDNESS MONTH FOCUSES ON INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Bismarck, ND – First response in any type of a disaster or emergency will come from an individual or family. The more prepared you are, the better your ability is to respond. With September as National Preparedness Month it is important to review the essential needs for an individual or a family's ability to plan and take action in the event of a disaster.

During an emergency, the more preparation, the calmer and more assured an individual or family will be. Discuss with family members different types of disasters that can happen in your area. Plan where to meet after a disaster if your house has been destroyed or evacuations have taken place. Each responsible family member should learn how and when to turn off utilities, such as electricity, water and gas. Inventory and replenish disaster supplies as needed. Ensure everyone in the household understands where emergency contact information for first responders is kept and how to contact 9-1-1. Conduct fire drills and practice evacuating the home twice a year. Know when to shelter-in-place or any additional precautions that may be needed.

Follow these simple steps:

Get a Kit - Supplies should be prepared that will allow individuals and families to survive for at least three days in the event an emergency occurs. The kit should include basic items like water, food, battery powered radio, flash light and a first aid kit. A complete list of recommended supplies is available on www.ready.gov and www.redcross.org/preparedness.

Make a Plan - Plan in advance what to do in an emergency. The plan should include a communications plan and address sheltering-in-place and evacuation. Additional information and templates are available on www.ready.gov and www.redcross.org/preparedness to help citizens get started.

Be Informed - Learn more about different threats that could affect your community and appropriate responses to them. Go to www.ready.gov and www.redcross.org/preparedness for more information about natural disasters and potential terrorist threats including biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological emergencies.

Get Involved - After preparing for possible emergencies, take the next step: get training in first aid and emergency response and get involved in preparing your community. Citizen Corps provides residents with opportunities to prepare, train and support local emergency

responders. Or volunteer through a local American Red Cross chapter. For more information or to get involved, visit www.citizencorps.gov to find your local Citizen Corps council or www.redcross.org/preparedness to find your local Red Cross chapter.

Local and tribal emergency managers serve as a resource for preparedness information. Emergency managers are aware of the hazards that can happen in the area where people live and work, and can provide presentations and information that will help citizens learn how to keep family members and co-workers safe when disaster strikes. Local chapters of the American Red Cross offer courses to help individuals and families prepare for emergencies.

National Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort held each September to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. National Preparedness Month 2005 is sponsored in North Dakota by the N.D. Citizen Corps Council, local chapters of the American Red Cross, the Division of Homeland Security of the N.D. Department of Emergency Services (DES) and local and tribal emergency managers.

Preparedness information and links to other web sites with detailed information can be found on the DES website at www.state.nd.us/des.

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